

OUR LADY OF THE SNOW FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

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Dear Faith Formation Families,

In June, when our region reached phase 2 of the NY State reopening plan, the Diocese of Rockville Centre opened parishes with limited capacity, allowing public liturgies and Sacraments, (Mass, weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.), following specific safety directives. If you have been to Mass since then, you've noticed that every other pew is blocked off, all entering the building are required to wear masks, and there are slight changes during the liturgy to allow for the implementation of safety regulations. Bishop Barres, in several memos regarding the reopening of parishes, has emphasized the need to adhere to safety regulations so that our diocese can continue to minister the sacraments to Catholics across Long Island.

Our Faith Formation program includes children belonging to several Long Island school districts, including Bayport- Blue Point, Patchogue-Medford, Sayville and others. Each of these schools is implementing a reopening plan in slightly different formats. Normally, students from these various districts come together for classes in our church.

As you know, we do not have a school building on our grounds, and students gather at tables for small group instruction within the church. This summer we began the process of revamping the curriculum in levels 1 through 9, looking to make it more interactive and Bible-centered. We also offered an online survey to Faith Formation families and the survey results were almost split 50-50, with half of the responses in favor of a full virtual program, and the other half ready to come to onsite classes. With those results in mind we looked at bringing students in on an abbreviated schedule, rather than for weekly classes, and created a plan for onsite classes.

This week we met again and discussed the details of how to safely maintain the small group structure, not just because it is our only option, not having classrooms, but also because we believe this structure allows students the possibility of having a personal encounter with Christ. We came to the agreement that it will be very difficult to utilize lessons that are more interactive while maintaining safety precautions within a small group structure.

Therefore we have decided to continue our program fully virtually until further notice. As the situation changes updates will be sent to you through the Remind App. Provided with this letter are Remind Codes for each level and instructions for joining Google Classroom. Please take a moment to join both. Lessons will post monthly starting in October in the Google Classroom. If your child is in Levels 1 through 4, we ask that a parent complete the lesson with him/her. Levels 5 through 9 can complete the virtual lessons independently. The lessons will be asynchronous, meaning assignments that can be

accessed at any time will be provided. Students are encouraged to check their online Faith Formation classroom at the beginning of each month for new content. Due dates will be posted within assignments.

We did place students into classes over the summer, according to the amount of volunteer catechists we had at that time. Some students, however, were on a waiting list due to a lack of teachers. We hope to bring the classes and catechists in at some point when it is safe to do so, and maybe we will get enough catechists at that time to provide teachers for those on waiting lists. If not, those on a waiting list will continue virtually on Home Study.

Right now it is important for all parents to sign up for Remind so that we can keep in contact with you, and for students to sign up for the Google Classroom, according to level so they can begin virtual content in October.

Textbook Shift:

We are shifting to the use of Bibles rather than textbooks this year. Levels 7 through 9 are to use the Breakthrough Bibles they were given in Level 6 to complete the online assignments. **Levels 1 through 6 are being given a Catholic Student Bible that they are to use for all nine levels of instruction. This Bible will be available for pickup at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses on Sunday, October 18th for Levels 1-3 and Sunday, October 25th at the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses for Levels 4-6. Please call the office at 631-363-6394 to RSVP, so that we know which of these Masses you will be attending.** During these Masses, the presiding priest will bless the student Bibles. I will begin to integrate the use of these Bibles within the virtual lessons in November. Our vision is that our students will grow into these Bibles from Level 1 up, and that by Level 9 they will be very comfortable and familiar with using them. For those who received the Breakthrough Bibles, we will focus on them for the remainder of their Formation, to continue their familiarization with Holy Scripture.

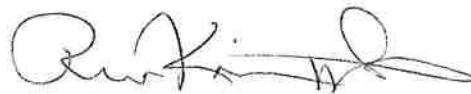
The shift to virtual-only learning for the time being presents a unique opportunity for our Faith Formation families. While it will not be possible to gather for classes, it is still possible to attend church. We highly encourage you to focus on bringing your families to Mass during this time. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life."

The safety and health of your child and your family will always be our first and highest priority. Let us pray together for an end to the worldwide pandemic.

Sincerely,



Loren Christie, OLS Faith Formation Director



Rev. Kevin Smith, Pastor